

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: February 21, 1959

SUBJECT: Conversation Between Ambassadors Kroll and Thompson in Moscow

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Wilhelm G. Grewe, German Ambassador
Deputy Under Secretary Robert Murphy
Mr. Martin J. Hillenbrand - GER

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During a lengthy conversation between Ambassador Grewe and Mr. Murphy (the major portion of which is reported in a separate memorandum of conversation), the former referred to a discussion which had taken place in Moscow on December 31 between Hans Kroll, Ambassador of the Federal Republic to the Soviet Union, and American Ambassador Thompson. Kroll had reported this conversation in detail, and Grewe read selections from his telegram. Kroll had noted that Thompson was inclined to broaden the scope of negotiations with the Soviets. He seemed to favor including discussion of such issues as German membership in NATO, the atomic armament of Germany, and the withdrawal of foreign forces from Germany and the Eastern European states, all of these subject, of course, to obtaining counter-concessions from the Soviets. Thompson apparently believed that this would not satisfy the Soviets, but such an offer would convince public opinion of the sincerity of Western proposals.

Mr. Murphy commented that, for years, people have been telling us that we must demonstrate our good will, although the basic tensions of today are caused by the Soviets. In response to Mr. Murphy's query, Ambassador Grewe said that he did not know if Ambassador Kroll agreed with the views expressed. He also noted that Ambassador Thompson had indicated that his views were personal, and that he did not know if they would be acceptable to his Government. The implication was, however, that Kroll's report might have caused some uneasiness in Bonn.

Mr. Murphy said

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Mr. Murphy said that it would be best for the Federal Republic to rely on the recent discussions in Bonn between the Secretary of State and Chancellor Adenauer, and not on off-the-cuff remarks made by the American Ambassador in Moscow. When important changes of policy are to be made, the United States Government will inform the Federal Republic directly. Mr. Murphy indicated that we might query our Ambassador in Moscow about this conversation. Of course, Mr. Murphy added, if there were to be an entirely new mentality in the Soviet Union, some sort of a complete European settlement might be possible, but there were no signs of this.

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